1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Wood-working, including the following specializations:
Doors, windows, and their frames; coffins.
Beds, tables, chairs, &c.
Mortars, pestles, grinding-handles, and handles for various iron implements.
Stools, household utensils, carved images, staves, knobkerries, &c.
Drums and other musical instruments.
Canoes (dug-outs and coracles).
Rope-making, nets, and rudimentary weaving.
Thatching has its specialists although all men can thatch.
Fishing.
Bee-hunting, including the making of hives.
Hunting.
Iron-smelting and smithing.
Medical-practice and Divination.

The last three professions of the list are sacred and are entered under special conditions. They are often passed on by inheritance, but not always. All of them require sacrifice at certain stages, and when the enslavement of a spirit (*oku andeka*) is required, it is socially allowable. This seems to be the case with these offices as with those of the king and his ministers, both because of benefits accruing to the community in their exercise and also because of inherent danger to the individuals who exercise these functions.

The advent of European commerce, industry, and government has created a number of types of employment for boys and young men, some of which entail prolonged absence from the village and a loosening or severing of kinship ties. Church and mission have also offered employment and have opened new opportunities for advance in place and in position.

Later childhood, then, is the period of technical training during which it is expected that a large amount of economic responsibility will be assumed. A child begins to own property even before this, and from the beginning of later childhood will be accounted legally responsible for his actions. It is recognized, however, that he should not be set tasks beyond the experience or ability of his age and that the full responsibility of adulthood will only come with marriage.

Umālēhē ka tonyōlā ongulu yuvala;
A youth does not scrape the pig for the wedding feast;
pehonjo pa siala (*ovonya*).
on the hoof there remain (bristles).

233 The cattle herd obtains most of its food by grazing, but in the dry season the grass withers. Childs states[1] that "Herding has been a [609] function of the sister's son, and even now there is a reluctance on the part of the boys to herd for their fathers."

235 462 [844] Chickens are owned and looked after by both men and women, but other animals only by men. Boys may have small stock of their own, and a boy's economic independence most frequently begins with his owning a chicken.

231 Hambly states that goats are more common than any other animal, and that every family has one or more. These animals are not fed or watered but are allowed to wander to find their own sustenance. Goats are not milked. Young males are castrated. The goat is frequently used in sacrifices. Sheep also are allowed to find their own food; the males are not castrated. Pigs are cared for comparatively carefully, receiving water and a daily supply of sweet potatoes and their leaves, together with some corn. Male pigs are castrated.[2]

APICULTURE[3]

[439] Beeswax was an important item of trade in the caravan days, and is still sold to Portuguese traders' stores, where it is massed into large rectangular cakes for export. Honey is eaten alone or with manioc, and [262] a fermented beer called *ochasa* is made by adding honey to corn-beer. 273 Fibre strainers are used for cleaning the wax, and large shallow baskets [253] are employed for drying the honey in the sun.

Large cylindrical hives, which are private property, are placed high in the trees. These are made by removing a cylinder of bark and lashing the halves together with strands of bark, forming a hive which has a diameter of one foot.

In Elende honey is removed from the hives during the months of August and December. One man ascends the tree in order to lower the hive with a long rope of bark or plaited fibre, while beneath the tree men are prepared to take the hive, which is opened over a smoky fire.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

326 782 *Smithing.* The profession of blacksmith or *ocivinda* is an important one, and, like hunting and divining, is sacred and is entered with special ritual. Often, but not always, these three professions are passed on by inheritance. For smithing two years' apprenticeship to a member of the profession is necessary, and is usually entered upon at the age of eighteen. At the end of this period the master examines his pupil, and makes tools for him, especially the heavy hammer or *onjundo* which is regarded as symbolic of his craft. For the inauguration ceremony the boy provides four chickens (2 male, 2 female), a dog, and a goat; the blood of these animals is sprinkled on his tools, and their flesh is eaten at a feast [553] attended by the villagers. Throughout the procedure the boy remains standing on the small anvil. Finally he is asked to choose his professional name; he then steps down from the anvil a qualified blacksmith.

(1) Childs, 1949, p.109. (2) Hambly, op.cit., p.154.
(3) Hambly, (4) 1934.

Formerly it was believed that a smith owed his skill to the help of the spirit of a person whom he had killed, and wooden effigies of this person were kept by the smith.(1) 326 782

The principal products of a blacksmith's forge are axe-heads, hoe blades,(2) tools for mat-making, arrowheads, knives, and brass bracelets. Iron, which is fairly plentiful, was formerly smelted over charcoal fires.(3) Today smiths use scrap iron. 325 412

Pottery

Pot-making is a part of women's work among the Ovimbundu. A wheel is not used. Clay is mixed with a silicate, usually gravel, rolled out in long ropes, and the pot built by the coiling process.(4) Pots are ornamented when wet by making deep incisions with a piece of gourd; they are then sun-dried, and fired in a kiln of dry grass. Pots are used as water-containers, as cooking vessels and as vessels for storing corn and beans, and, when made in a very large size, for brewing beer.(5) 323 [462]

No ritual attaches to pot-making, except at the opening of a new clay-pit, when, in the presence of both men and women from the village, the medicine-man sacrifices a chicken over the open pit.(6) [782]

Weaving and Spinning

Looms have not been used among the Ovimbundu since they have been a people, although progenitors of the kingly families who came from the Bangala or Congo groups may have done weaving. Trade cloth has been known and used by the Ovimbundu for nearly 300 years.(7) Skins have been used in remote areas; Hambly when he mentions bark-cloth as being worn by the Ovimbundu is probably referring to the Ngangela. Spun cotton, however, is used for repairs, and there is a cotton plant in most gardens. Spinning is done always by men.(8) 286 439 [281] [287] [283] 462

Basketry

All girls learn to make baskets, although some become more proficient than others. Knowledge of basket-making implies also an understanding of dyeing, since coloured strands of grass are interwoven to make geometric patterns.(9) Baskets, and also basket-trays, are usually made by the coiling process.(10) 285 462 [382]

(1) Hambly, (2) 1934, pp.158-60. The ceremony was described from Njongolo village in Elende.
(2) See Cashmen, 1944, pp.140-1.
(3) For details of the blacksmith's forge and tools, see Hambly, op.cit., pp.160-1; Cashmen, 1944, pp.139, 140, 145-6.
(4) See Hambly, op.cit. Plates XXXIII and XXXIV, and Childs, 1949, Plate VIII.
(5) Hambly, op.cit., p.168; Cashmen, op.cit., pp.144-5.
(6) Hambly, op.cit., p.169.
(7) Childs, personal communication. See also Childs, 1949, p.171, note 1.
(8) See Hambly, p.177, and Cashmen, 1944, p.136.
(9) Red, yellow, black, and brown dyes are used. For a description of the process, see Hambly, op.cit., pp.170-1.
(10) See Hambly, op.cit., p.171, and Cashmen, op.cit., pp.141-2 for details of basket-making. Also for illustrations Hambly, op.cit. and Childs, 1949.

He draws the crescentic arrowhead (p. 123) still common among the Ovimbundu and Vachokue; the double iron gong (p. 122); and the musical bow, which he calls a viola (p. 121).

Sogaur states that iron-working had an advanced technique at Dindo, more than half a century ago. According to Sogaur, the blacksmith was using scrap iron from European sources (II, p. 14).

Perhaps the most valuable of Chatelain's books is "Fifty Folk Tales of Angola." The stories are accompanied by translations and ethnological notes, the most important of which are references to the carrying of a corpse on a pole; the building of a cairn of stones over the corpse of a hunter; matrilineal descent and the power of the maternal uncle over the persons of his nieces and nephews (sisters' children). My observations included some details respecting the pawning of a sister's children to redeem the debts of their mother's brother. Chatelain adds that sisters' children are successors to private property and chieftainship (pp. 8–10). My notes agree that property is inherited by children of a deceased man's sister, but my informants said that a new chieftain is normally the eldest son of the principal wife of the dead chief. Chatelain's folklore stories, fifty in number, relate chiefly to animals; this was the only kind of story told to me, but W. C. Bell has recorded a few tales of another type.

Marquardsen (1928) devotes only one-fourth of his book to the ethnology of Angola, which he treats in a very general way; there is no section dealing specifically with any particular tribe. The author calls attention to Chapman's observation of rock paintings of South African Bushman type, between Cuma and Luimbale in northwest Angola. I have elsewhere remarked on the occasional occurrence of physical types which show a strain of Bushman blood. Today Bushmen penetrate southern Angola from the Kalahari (Plate LXIX, Figs. 1, 2), but their presence in times past or present does not affect the course of history or the data of ethnology to an appreciable extent.

Marquardsen gives some notes of a general kind on Vaheneca, Mahuila and other tribes of southwest Angola. The suggestion is feasible that the Umbundu name Suku, for a supreme being, is the same as the Nzambi of Lunda and the Congo. Marquardsen refers to the importance of the maternal uncle in Umbundu society, to the poison ordeal, and to the burial of an Umbundu chief in oxhide, all of which points were recorded in my observations at Elende.

Ferreira Diniz's book is unobtainable, but, judging from the summary given in *Anthropos* (XX, 1925, pp. 321–331), the information was collected by a questionnaire widely distributed among adminis-

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

the tree in order to lower the hive with a long rope of bark or plaited fiber, while beneath the tree men are prepared to take the hive, which is opened over a smoky fire. The men wear no protection, consequently they are badly stung. Boys are encouraged to help, and those who run away receive no honey. Honey may be eaten alone or with manioc. No drink is made from honey only, but *ochasa* is the name given to beer with honey in it. *Ovingundu* is a drink made from pounded corn which has been soaked in water to which a little honey has been added. The drink is allowed to remain untouched over night; thus it becomes sweet and is mildly intoxicating.

Wax is a very important item of trade. In the remote places natives bring to small trading posts balls of wax which are about two pounds in weight. These in former days were a standard of exchange in terms of which other values could be measured. These balls of wax are made into large cakes for foreign export. In the Esele country a fiber strainer is used for cleaning the wax. Honey is sometimes dried in very large baskets which are three feet in diameter and two inches deep. These baskets were not observed among the Ovimbundu, but they are used in the region of Cassanga in southern Angola. The honey of wild bees when eaten in the comb is palatable; it would be more so if one could disregard the presence of numerous dead bees.

The bow is the chief weapon of the hunter. The release of the arrow is made with the index and middle fingers (Plate XXXIX, Fig. 1). I have observed this method among the Ovimbundu of the Benguela Highlands, in the region of Kipungo, in the far south among the Vakuanyama, and among the Vasele of the Novo Redondo hinterland. Arrows differ considerably in pattern as the illustrations show (Plate XVII, Figs. 1–9); the Ovimbundu have arrow-points of excellent workmanship. The manufacture of these arrow-points is one of the most skilled occupations of the blacksmith. Each man makes his own shafts and feathers them. The arrows of the Vasele have leaf-shaped iron points; so also have those used by the Vakuanyama.

Among the Ovimbundu are specialists who make bows from elastic woods called *usia* and *ocambia*. The bow itself is *ohonji* and the arrow is *usongo*. At the third shot I saw a young Ocimbundu boy split a cane which was placed upright at a distance of thirty-three feet. The throwing club (*ohunya*) is used for killing small game such as hares.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP15

224 874 an initiation feast when the training is ended. At the feast all people of the village may be present but they do not dance; only the professional hunters may do so. The boy who is to be initiated must not speak or move until he "feels the spirit on his head"; then he gives meat to the people. After hunters have captured game for the feast, the blood from these animals is used to smear over the bow, arrows, and spear which have been made for the novice by his tutor. This is analogous to the initiation of the young blacksmith who [326] receives blood-sprinkled tools made by the master blacksmith.

224 788 There is in connection with the life and death of the professional hunter a certain amount of ritual and precaution. The night before setting out to hunt is a time of dancing and renewal of the implements of the chase, which are kept in a house specially prepared for them. A hunter who is on the eve of departure calls in other professional hunters to share the ceremony, which includes the rubbing of the bows and other implements with palm oil. A libation of beer is poured on the bows, spears, and arrows, but no medicine-man is present. Some of the bows are never used, because they are merely the symbols of the personality and prowess of dead hunters whose names they have taken. The food and cooking pots of a hunter must never be associated with those of ordinary household use. If a hunter is following the tracks of an animal he must not point with his finger as this action will drive the animal away. The correct way to point is by use of the feathered end of an arrow. The hunter [834] must not sleep with his wife the night before setting out in quest of game.

224 782 I have frequently seen in front of the hut of a hunter a number of skulls of antelope and other animals mounted on poles arranged in circular formation (Plate XXXII, Fig. 2). These skulls seem to be trophies, which are invariably taken away by the hunter if he finds a new home. There is no reason to doubt the statement that these skulls are an offering to the spirits who give good luck in hunting, because such a belief would be in harmony with the general respect for ancestral ghosts, which are thought to influence the affairs of the living.

764 224 On several occasions, notably near Ganda and in the Cassonge country, I have seen the tombs of hunters. These are large structures built of slabs of granite laid with some symmetry. The rock tomb is invariably placed on the top of a commanding eminence of granite. The skulls of animals which the hunter has killed are piled on the top of the cairn, but I do not know whether these are the trophies

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

436 804 Balls of wax and tobacco were, and are now, definite standar of trade. To some extent rubber as a medium of exchange has be used through contact with eastern Angola. The Umbundu wo *ocilila* expresses a weight of about thirty kilos.

805 221 There is no measure for minutes or hours. I have seen a ma of the Luchazi tribe keep account of the number of days taken on journey by cutting notches on a stick. Ngonga says that the Ovim bundu reckon by cutting notches, also by knotting a piece of strin Three days would be expressed by the words *akumbi atatu* ("thre suns"). The word day or sun is used in fixing a time. There is n word for week. A month is *osai*, which is the word for moon. Whe the corn is ripe the people say, "We are in a new year." Anothe yearly time mark is the arrival of the first rains, probably in th middle of September.

The words *oku lima* ("to cultivate") yield the word *ulima*, whic designates the period between the beginnings of two rainy seasons Corn is planted about the time of the first heavy rains, which occu in late September or early October. Naturally, this important occa sion forms a somewhat uncertain time base; nevertheless it is th one used to express the lapse of years up to five in number. Afte such a period the estimation of time is unreliable.

INDUSTRIES

IRON-WORK

326 Among occupations of primary importance is that of the black- smith (*ocitinda*). Owing to the increasing importation of hoe blades and other iron goods, together with the facilities for collecting scrap iron, the winning and smelting of iron is increasingly rare. There are probably very few places where the old type of conical clay furnace now exists. Almost any fragments of iron are melted at the forge where a box is kept to hold nails, hoop iron from packing cases, and other fragments resulting from proximity to a European culture.

Nothing is mixed with the iron, neither is there any casting in molds. The only process is the forging of red-hot iron. The Ovim- bundu do not draw iron wire, although they know of the process which is practised by the Vachokue.

The work of the blacksmith was studied at the village of Njongolo in Elende. The men were for a time reticent respecting the nature of their training and the ceremony of initiation, but the chief of the village helped considerably by persuading the men to speak freely.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Any boy who wishes to become a blacksmith may be trained for the work. It is not necessary that his father should have been a blacksmith. When the youth begins his training he must be eighteen years of age and physically robust. His first duties are the beating of hot iron on the anvil; he is also required to collect and soften fragments of iron. He works very hard but is never allowed to finish anything; the master has to complete the work.

At the end of two years the youth asks the master blacksmith to examine him. What is more important still, the master is asked to make the heavy hammer (*onjundo*), which is used for beating hot iron on the largest anvil (Plate XXXVIII, Fig. 1). There is no doubt as to the sacredness of this hammer, which is a symbol of the completion of apprenticeship. There is also the idea of the master handing on his skill to the pupil by personally making and presenting the tools. I made repeated efforts before being able to purchase one of these hammers; finally it was procurable only at a high price. The value is due to ritualistic associations, the large quantity of iron used in the making, and the labor required to weld the head to the shaft.

On the day of his inception the boy has to purchase four chickens, two male and two female, one pup, and a goat. The master blacksmith makes all the tools for the apprentice, but ritual centers chiefly in the fabrication of the big hammer (*onjundo*). While the master is making this the boy stands on the small anvil which is close to the ground, between the forge and the large anvil under the tree.

When the hammer (*onjundo*) is made, and while it is still red-hot, the handle is pushed into the belly of the dog. The goat and the four chickens are then killed. All the tools are brought together so that blood from the slaughtered animals may be sprinkled over them. The flesh of these animals is eaten with corn and beans. "The blacksmith calls many people to help him, and they like to eat the food," concluded my interpreter.

During the entire ceremony, also throughout the feast, the boy stands on the anvil. There he remains until the master says, "You may speak and tell us what name you want." Perhaps the boy says, "I am Ndumbu." The people in the crowd clap hands and make a trilling with their fingers in their open mouths. The boy steps from the anvil; he is a blacksmith. My interpreter continued, "He must work hard and people must pay him. He used to work hard, but the master took the money."

There was an ancient belief that a blacksmith owed his skill to the help of the spirit of a person he had killed. Wooden effigies

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

326 778 of the murdered man were placed near the large anvil (p. 163), or they might be kept in the home of the blacksmith. Such figures are still used (Plate XXI, Fig. 3) but the killing of a victim is not now possible. Blacksmiths are free to marry without restrictions other than those imposed by the classificatory system of relationships.

325 348 The blacksmith's forge is a thatched house about twelve feet square with low eaves that almost reach the ground. The height from the floor to the point of the dome is fifteen feet. In the middle of the floor is a pit ten inches deep in which there is a quantity of charcoal brought from the charcoal burner's fire about half a mile away. At the sides of the pit are three stone seats for the workers. Two of these seats are occupied by men, each of whom works a pair of bellows. The two-chambered bellows is hewn from a block of wood in such a way as to give two circular air chambers from which wooden tubes lead to the fire. These wooden tubes are continued by clay tubes which project into the fire. Over the two round wooden chambers a piece of hide is stretched and tied over the woodwork. Two slender upright sticks, which the operator works up and down, are attached to the hide. In one corner of the hut there is a heap of charcoal, and in another corner lies the scrap iron. An iron rake with a wooden handle is used for stirring the charcoal in the fire. Plates XVI, XXXVII, and XXXVIII illustrate tools and processes.

413 The principal tools are:

(1) A flat stone anvil resting on rocks under a tree. The anvil is at such a height that the striker stands upright. At this anvil the metal is beaten with the heavy hammer *onjundo*.

(2) *Onjundo*, the most sacred of the tools, is 12.5 cm long. Its value is about that of an ox.

(3) There are tongs which can be clamped by a sliding metal ring. The larger tongs are 63 cm long and the smaller ones are 35 cm.

(4) The cutter is boat-shaped and triangular in cross section. The back, which is grasped in the hand, is 0.5 cm thick, tapering to a fine cutting edge.

(5) An iron holder for an axhead during the heating and hammering is 23 cm long. It is octagonal, hollow, and fits like a sheath over the shaft of the axhead.

(6) For heating the iron on the small anvil, after it has been roughly pounded to shape with the hammer (*onjundo*) on the large anvil, there is a smaller hammer (*usonjolo*) of which there are three varieties. These differ only in size.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

The principal products of the forge are axheads, which can be reversed in the shaft so as to form adzes. Hoe blades, tools for mat-making, brass bracelets, knives, and implements for gouging out the pith of gourds or hollowing out a drum, are also made. Arrowheads are likewise an important manufacture. 326

The blacksmith makes a saw blade, 47 cm in length, from hoop iron. The teeth of the saw are turned alternately to the right and left and the serrated blade is roughly hafted in wood (Plate XVI, Fig. 4). Another product of the forge is an iron tool hafted in wood. The pointed blade, which is round in cross section, tapers to a point used for boring holes in wood, after the tool has been made red-hot. Small axes, many of which are used ceremonially in dances, have remarkably well-fashioned blades decorated with punched designs in the form of geometrical patterns.

WOOD-CARVING

A glance over the list of trees named and used by the Ovimbundu indicates a complete knowledge of woodcraft which is in the hands of specialists. To name only a few, there is the *omanda* tree, also the *omue*, which yield charcoal for the smithy. *Ombula* wood is used for stools, while the elastic timber from the *omanda* tree is suitable for bows. The *ekenge*, *usamba*, and *ociyeko* trees supply bark for binding crosspieces to the upright poles when making the framework of a house; the same bark is used by Ovimbundu and Vachokue of eastern Angola for making bark cloth. In addition to the use of bark for these purposes it is made into large cylindrical receptacles for maize, while its use for beehives is general throughout Angola. Beehives are often made by professional hunters. A traveler notices the mutilation of trees from which complete cylinders of bark have been removed (Plate XL, Fig. 2); half of the cylinder makes a receptacle for carrying on the shoulder. 314

When a small pig is to be transported, four holes are bored in the bark container. Through these holes the legs of the animal are placed and tied together on the under side (Plate XXXI, Fig. 1). This is a more humane transportation than that of tying the feet of the animal to a pole which is supported on the shoulders of the two men who are carriers. 482

In the neighborhood of Cangamba fishermen make and use canoes of bark about fifteen feet in length (Plate LXXXV, Fig. 2). This illustration shows a man taking his nets into midstream where they will be pegged to the river bed. 501

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

straight lines. The legs show the usual flexion of the knees and a shortening which is out of proportion to the body length. The lower limbs of most Angolan figures have these characteristics. The body of this figure is hollow and the head detachable. The incised headdress is imitative of the coiffure of Vachokue women. 532

Cangamba, a village in eastern Angola, is a confluence of tribal elements, namely, Vambuella, Luchazi, Babunda, and Vachokue, whose physical appearance, hairdressing, tooth mutilation, and tribal marks differ considerably. The man who sold the figurine brought it furtively. He was an Ocimbundu, but the work is of Chokue origin. The figure, I am informed, was filled with medicine, then placed near a patient who was undergoing curative treatment. 171 [755]

The figurine (*ngeve*) of a woman having a number of dark feathers attached to her back has only one use. A caravan setting out for a long journey is accompanied by a medicine-man whose outfit includes such a figurine. Should the caravan leader be in doubt when choosing between two paths, the medicine-man sets up the image at the parting of the ways. He kneels before it and asks questions, then plugs his nostrils in order to make replies in a falsetto voice supposed to come from the figurine. Thus advised respecting the route to follow, the caravan continues its journey (Plate XXI, Fig. 5; p. 156). 484 778 787

The wooden figure (Plate XXI, Fig. 3) is of exceptional interest because of its connection with the blacksmith's craft, which is associated with introductory rites for apprentices. In former days a newly initiated blacksmith was expected to disappear for a period during which he killed a man. On returning to the work of his forge the blacksmith made a wooden figure of which this example, one of five obtained, is typical. The spirit of the murdered man took up its abode in the effigy and in this way helped with the work. The figure, which is of the usual dimensions, namely, 36 cm high, has the greater part of its surface covered with reddened earth (pp. 159–160). 326 775

Two figurines (Plate XXI, Figs. 1, 6) were obtained from women of the Vachokue tribe in the village of Ngongo, Ngalangi. Here the Vachokue and the Ovimbundu mingle to such an extent that customs are no doubt transferred from one culture to the other. These wooden images are used by childless women, or by women whose infants have died. The woman who sold these figures pressed them to her breasts to show the manner of use. People standing around smiled and nodded their approval. A wooden figure of this kind is substituted for a dead twin. 171 842 [845]

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

the yam also was introduced. All these food plants spread with great rapidity, hence the extent of their distribution is not a guide to their antiquity.

THE BLACKSMITH'S CRAFT IN AFRICA

The antiquity of the blacksmith's occupation is not easy to determine, though the usefulness of the craft, and the accessibility of surface-ore in many parts of Africa, might incline one to favor a theory of rapid diffusion. There is an extensive literature dealing with the origin of the blacksmith's craft, which is variously attributed to the Negro, the ancient Egyptians, or to Hamitic invaders.

Diffusion of the craft, and not independent invention in many parts of Africa, is suggested by the continuity of like forms of apparatus; taboos of the same kind connected with the blacksmith; treatment of smiths as a special caste; also their employment of ritual in making furnaces, training apprentices, and consecrating their tools.

Iron objects requiring considerable skill in their manufacture are described by the earliest writers who came in contact with northern Angola, and early observations relating to iron gongs and axes have already been given. This evidence therefore suggests that the Ovimbundu must have had a knowledge of the working of iron when they entered the Benguela Highlands.

The following data from many parts of Africa are adduced to show the relation of the blacksmith's craft among the Ovimbundu to a wider background, of which Umbundu customs form a part. The Ovimbundu have developed ritual aspects of the blacksmith's craft which have already been described, and along with these the following instances should be considered.

Naturally, special local developments occur, but the general attitude of the Ovimbundu toward blacksmiths is in accord with a widely distributed body of African beliefs affecting Bantu, semi-Bantu, Sudanic, and Hamitic-speaking tribes, from which a few instances may be noted.

Among the Kpelle of Liberia a blacksmith receives no pay for work done for a chief, but he is free from military service. The blacksmith is a confidential person for the whole village, and he is conversant with many family secrets (D. Westermann, Die Kpelle, p. 170). Blacksmiths of the Ibo of Nigeria form a strong union which resents intrusion into the secrets of the craft. Blacksmiths are to be found only in certain towns which form halting places on

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

171 their itinerary (G. T. Basden, Among the Ibos of Nigeria, p. 176).
326 At Ife in a sacred grove I saw objects which were described as the hammer and the anvil of the first blacksmith. Over the anvil stone were the remains of a recently sacrificed dog. Such an offering is made twice a year to Ogun, the patron god of blacksmiths. Among the Masai, blacksmiths are said to be unlucky with cattle, and are therefore not allowed to own them. Smiths have their own language which is not well understood by other people of the tribe (A. C. Hollis, The Masai, p. 331). The Suk say that no woman may see a blacksmith at work because his tools would become heavy in his hand, then he would go mad and die. There is chanting by the blacksmiths during forging and molding (M. W. H. Beech, The Suk, p. 18).

Working in iron is accompanied by many special rites among the Bakitara; in fact, taboos are observed from the time of preparing the charcoal. Smiths belong to the serf class. Among the omens, sneezing is a warning from a ghost indicating that there is danger near and work is therefore discontinued. Offerings are made to the spirit of the hill where ore is dug in order to prevent burial of the diggers (J. Roscoe, IV, p. 218). When a Banyankole smith is making a new hammer he gives a feast at which six goats are killed. This sacredness of the large hammer was emphasized among the Ovimbundu.

Southwest of Lake Bangweolo a small shrine is erected near the smelting furnace, and here a prayer is offered to spirits of former smelters (H. B. Barnes, *J.R.A.I.*, LVI, p. 191). The Ila-speaking people of Rhodesia have a principal blacksmith who is named *munganga wa butale* ("the iron doctor"). Secrets of the craft are preserved by transmission from father to son only. The *munganga* takes charge of the preparation of iron and directs the ceremonies (E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, I, pp. 203–207). E. Torday records that the Bambala have a T-shaped hammer with a pointed handle. "It is practically impossible to obtain a specimen of these hammers since death is the portion of a smith who parts with his tools." (I, p. 406.)

These examples do not reveal the origin of the blacksmith's craft and its ritual, but they explain Umbundu customs as part of a system of ideas which affects the whole continent of Africa south of the Sahara.

BANTU RELIGION AND SOCIAL SYSTEM

171 The spiritual beliefs of the Ovimbundu have already been shown to agree with those of the Congo basin and southwest Africa.

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[p. 391]

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BLACKSMITHS AT WORK, OVIMBUNDU, ELENDE

Fig. 1. Working bellows. Fig. 2. Forging axhead

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BLACKSMITHS AT WORK, OVIMBUNDU, ELENDE

Fig. 1. Pounding on anvil. Fig. 2. Using cutting tool

[p. 392]

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professional hunters, and the smearing of the novice's bow and arrows with blood from the meat is an important point of ritual. The bow and arrows are made by the master for his pupil; a practice strictly analogous to the making of tools for a young blacksmith by the master who has trained him.

In connection with the life and death of a hunter a certain amount of ritual survives, and this despite long European contacts, game laws, and the development of an economic system based primarily on extensive cultivation of maize and beans. But though these circumstances might tend to discourage hunting and its attendant ritual, other facts have contributed to survival. An embargo on guns and powder has led to prolonged use of bows and arrows, with which all hunters are expert, though some, despite official prohibition, have muzzle loading guns. Bows are in general use, and their continuance has no doubt aided survival of ritual, since the rites themselves are closely associated with the bows.

The night before a professional hunter sets out is an occasion for renewal of implements of the chase, that is, renewal in a spiritual sense, by a ceremony designed to transfer power in a magical way from the disused weapons of deceased hunters to the weapons in use. Weapons of dead hunters are kept in a small hut to which a hunter repairs on the eve of departure. He rubs the old weapons (bows, clubs, and spears) with palm-oil; then pours over them a libation of beer. No medicine-man is present, so for the occasion a hunter functions as his own priest.

It is hazardous and perhaps unprofitable to attempt an analysis of the philosophy behind these ritual acts. Yet the weapons are symbols of the personality and prowess of dead hunters whose names they have received. Therefore the suggestion that the hunter is acquiring power from the dead is reasonable, and the idea harmonizes with all that is known of ancestor worship among Bantu tribes.

The food and cooking pots of a hunter must never be associated with those of ordinary household use. If a hunter is following the tracks of an animal he may not point with his finger, since this action will drive the animal away. He may, however, point with the feathered end of an arrow. A dog must have his ears clipped in a peculiar way or he will not hear and obey. A hunter may not sleep with his wife the night before setting out in quest of game. Before leaving home a hunter washes his eyes with a concoction of herbs to give greater acuity of vision.

In any village the hut of a professional hunter can be readily distinguished by a number of poles erected near the entrance. On these supports are placed the skulls of animals killed in the chase. A traveler cannot fail to notice the tombs of hunters, which consist of cairns of stones enclosing a

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ing become thin; but avoidance of milk is really one of those deeply rooted food prejudices which even the people themselves could not explain if willing to do so. 234

The Vakuanyama of south Angola make butter by swinging two large calabashes on a pole, but though this practice is known to the Ovimbundu, they do not imitate the method. The flesh of cattle that have died from disease or accident is eaten, and uses are found for the hide, tail, and horns. But cattle are not slaughtered except at a funeral feast, after which the horns are mounted on a pole over the grave, and perhaps the skulls are preserved near the site of burial. 231

Cattle serve as fines, sacrifices, and gifts, including a bride's dowry, but the social and religious importance is greater than the economic use. This is in accordance with what might be expected, since the pastoral activities of the Ovimbundu are but an adopted series of traits which can be found among numerous pastoral tribes of southwest, south, and east Africa. Wrapping the head of a king in oxhide which is ceremonially renewed has been mentioned.[1] In addition to this rite, the use of oxhide bracelets by mourners, and the use of an oxhide shroud for chiefs and kings, must be recorded. Use of ceremonial fire which is distributed from the chief's house when a new village is founded, and creation of new fire after epidemic sickness, are Umbundu traits which form part of the typical pastoral culture elsewhere.

Consideration of food supply has indicated the preservation of ritual and belief, not intensively, but with sufficient force to show great tenacity of indigenous culture in the face of prolonged and disturbing intrusions. 182

HANDICRAFTS

Incomparably important is the craft of the blacksmith. The preservation of ritual and belief was at once suggested by the workers' refusal to sell me any of the tools, especially the large hammer (onjundo), although the sum offered covered the value of the implements and the time lost in making new ones. After three months I acquired a large hammer from the wife of a blacksmith who had not worked at his trade for many years. She parted with the tool in the absence of her husband, but demanded a sum which would have purchased an ox. Other tools were made for me. 326

Information respecting the blacksmiths' ritual was given in the village of Njongolo in Elende, but I am informed that the beliefs are general, and they are certainly compatible with all that is known of blacksmiths' ritual among Bantu Negroes, Sudanic Negroes, and Hamiticized Negroes of east Africa. I found no mining of iron but saw a site where the ore was for-

[1] [Cf. p. 160, cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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326 merly obtained. Blacksmiths now smelt scrap-iron from European sources.
[582] Among the Ovimbundu, blacksmiths are restricted in marriage only by those kinship laws arising from their classificatory system of relationships, and the operation of a system of cross-cousin marriage. The smiths are not an endogamous group, and the occupation is not hereditary.

But despite these differences, which are not quite in harmony with the general body of custom relating to Negro blacksmiths, the Ovimbundu preserve ritual which is part of a widely distributed attitude toward workers in iron.

When a boy begins his training he should be about eighteen years of age and physically robust. He is required to collect and soften fragments of iron in the charcoal fire, to work the bellows, and to beat iron on the anvil, but for a time he is not allowed to make implements, the chief of which are hoe blades and axe heads. At the end of two years the novice asks his master to examine him, and preparations are made for an inauguration ceremony should the youth have proved sufficiently skilled to become an independent blacksmith.

326 782 On the day of initiation the boy has to buy four chickens, two male and two female, one pup, and a goat. The master blacksmith has already made a complete set of tools for presentation to his pupil, but the big hammer (onjundo) is not quite completed until the day of initiation. While the final touches are being given to this object the novice stands still on a small stone anvil which is situated between the forge and the large anvil.

When the hammer is completed, and while it is still red hot, it is thrust into the belly of the pup provided by the novice. The goat and the four chickens are killed and some of their blood is sprinkled over the new tools which are gathered in a heap. The blacksmiths invite their friends to feast on the flesh of the sacrificed animals.

326 553 The boy remains standing on the anvil[1] until the master says, "You may speak and tell us what name you want." Perhaps the boy says, "I am Ndumbu;" then the people clap hands and trill with their fingers in their open mouths. My interpreter said, "The boy will work hard and people will pay him. He used to work hard but his master took the pay."

326 778 Near the large anvil may be seen one or more wooden figures which are still regarded as essential to the work of the blacksmith. I was informed that a blacksmith owes his skill to the aid of a spirit of some person he has killed, and that this spirit uses the wooden figure as a dwelling place. If this information is reliable the wooden figure is of the nature of a shrine, but I was not able to learn of any ceremony for inducing a spirit into the wooden figure. The impression left was that the spirit of the murdered person re-

[1] [i.e., on the day of initiation of apprentice blacksmith. -- Analyst]

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sided permanently in the wooden figure. This ritual murder is now impossible, but the wooden figures are still used in the way described. 326 778

Women are never engaged in blacksmiths' work; neither are they employed as wood carvers. Among men wood carving is a specialized occupation, and within the craft itself are men who deal solely with one branch of the work. Thus in a village perhaps only one man is capable of making a drum, while another carves life-like wooden figures of animals, and a third specializes in the fabrication of household implements. [462] 532

Among the Ovimbundu women are the only potters, but I found just one exception in the case of a man who said that he learned the potter's craft in eastern Angola among the Vachokue. No ritual is connected with the making of pottery, but I observed that women always frequented one pit for their clay and in doing so passed better clay which was more accessible. I learned that a clay pit has to be consecrated by a medicine-man who kills a chicken and sprinkles the blood in the pit. All women at some time learn the arts of pottery making and basketry, but by the process of selection the industries become concentrated in the hands of the most skillful. 462 323 [782]

Only women make baskets; a craft in which they are skilled, especially in the gathering of plants and the extraction of dyes of soft shades. Such dyes have considerable endurance even though exposed to bright sunlight. Imported dyes are now competing with indigenous products, but the latter are still preferred in most localities. One might expect that women who are skilled in basket making would be expert weavers of mats, but this is not so. Mat making is in the hands of men who are skilled specialists, and within the mat making industry are at least three principal divisions of the craft, one for each type of mat. 462 285

Men spin cotton for mending clothes, but I have not seen women so engaged. I did not see any looms in use in Angola, but they survived up to a few years ago, and in the youth of my interpreter, who was about thirty years of age, looms worked by men were plentiful. 283 462 286

House building shows a division of labor according to age and sex. Men are responsible for cutting the poles, digging the trench in which these uprights are set, and binding the cross-pieces with bark. Men are likewise responsible for plastering the walls and laying the thatch. Women carry water to the clay pit and transport the puddled clay to the men who are plastering the walls. Children, some of them so young that they have to be rescued from a swampy grave, delight in puddling the clay with their feet. The rectangular pit is always as near the house as possible in order to minimize the labor of transport. I suggested that some of the tasks should 462 331